

GREEK VICTORIES CREATE DIFFICULTY

Fate of Constantinople Again Demanding Attention of Old World Diplomats as Hellenes Press On.

By Frank H. Simonds.

WHILE American attention is fixed upon Geneva, Washington and Upper Silesia to the exclusion of all else in the foreign field, the Eastern question is once more assuming a threatening appearance and the diplomacy of the Old World, at least, must shortly return to the discussion of this, one of the most ancient of all disputes.

Today the long series of Greek victories have brought about a situation which is difficult in the extreme, nor is it rendered less difficult by the fact that the Greeks not only base their present claims upon the historical title which goes back to the very dawn of history, but also upon victories which are in themselves almost as recent as the day's news. And the Greek claim, is of course, to Constantinople, now as always the prize of the world.

A solution of the Eastern question, so far as it

Roman Empire was divided. Byzantium became the capital of an Eastern Empire which rapidly became Hellenized and persisted as an independent Greek state right down to the fifteenth century. In its period of prosperity, moreover, it not alone ruled all of the Balkan states, but Asia Minor as well.

AFTER a long resistance this Byzantine Empire collapsed in the face of the onrush of the Turks. It endured, however, long enough to save Europe from ultimate subjection by the Turk, for when the Turk did arrive in the valley of the Danube there was sufficient vitality and unity in Europe to defeat the Moslem invader. But, although the Byzantine Empire perished and not only Constantinople but Athens became Turkish, there survived and in

long continue. Greek victories must, it would seem, at no distant date dispose of Turkish resistance. Guerrilla warfare may continue, but with the Bagdad line solidly in Greek hands, a real frontier, militarily speaking, would seem to be assured the Greeks, a line which might be held with a minimum of military expenditure.

But, assuming that this be the military situation, what of the political? Already Athens has begun to clamor for this occupation of Constantinople. On the military side this is logical. The Turk has been beaten and his capital lies open. Should not the Greeks enjoy the right which their success has established? But on the political side the situation is different. Allied fleets and troops dominate and occupy Constantinople. A forcible entrance of the city is quite impossible, unthinkable.

THUS Greece, at the moment finds herself in an even more disappointing situation than Russia after her victories which led to San Stefano. Still it is plain that the existing situation cannot endure indefinitely. Today Greece occupies Thrace and thus commands the landward approach to Constantinople from Europe. Her armies have passed the Bagdad Railway in Asia and thus similarly control the landward roads to Scutari, which faces Constantinople across the Straits. Either Greece must be compelled to evacuate her Asiatic conquests or Constantinople must, in the end, pass to her.

But who will compel her to evacuate? Britain, on the whole, sees Greek predominance in the Aegean and at the Straits as advantageous to herself, for Greece is and must remain a ward and a protege of Britain. If Greece gets and keeps Constantinople the old dread of a Russian push to open waters of the Mediterranean will be abolished. Greece will be a British outpost against Russia, the English sentinel on the Bosphorus. And, in addition, the Greek army will be available in Asia to keep in check the unruly Turk, who is a neighbor of British Mesopotamia.

But if the Greek obtains Constantinople and retains Ismid, Bigha, Smyrna and Brusa, then Greece will become a really considerable state and what is more, will have an opportunity to repeat the great Byzantine achievements of other centuries. She will organize Asia Minor, or to put the thing quite frankly, British capital and British resources will finance a Greek occupation and development of all of Asia Minor. For if memories of the Byzantine Empire will doubtless be stirred, still it is easy to exaggerate the limits of possibility. Yet it is far from impossible that much of Western Asia Minor may be again Hellenized, as it has been more than once in history.

ALL things considered this would seem the best solution of the Eastern question. The Turk is hopeless. He has lost his European empire and his Asiatic star is crumbling. Constantinople under Greek control will be a modern city with all the circumstances of modern commercial and industrial prosperity. The British will see to that. It will regain the greatness, as a trade center, as a world port, which it lost when the Turk brought the paralysis of Islam to the shores of the Golden Horn. The new Greek state, surrounding the Aegean and extending well into the interior of Asia Minor will represent a return of Europe to Asia, new fields will be tilled, new mines opened, railroads will be built, with British capital, not with Greek, but the gain will be for all concerned, Greek, Turkish and British.

But she must recognize that such an expansion of Greece can only be attained at the expense of the dearest hope of the Italians. As it now stands most Italians see their future in the Near East. France, in seizing Algeria, Tunis and Morocco has forestalled Italy in that Africa Minor which was so important a detail in ancient Rome. Britain has laid hands upon Egypt and will leave it only if it becomes in fact free or nominally independent and actually a British protectorate, with the fact becomingly disguised. Even on the east coast of the Adriatic, Italian hopes have been baffled, a new Jugo-Slav state has risen and already disputes Italian rule in Fiume and asserts claims even to Trieste.

TODAY Tripoli is no solace for Italian disappointment in Tunis and recent additions at French and British expense in the Sahara and in Somaliland do not reconcile Italy to seeing Greece take foot on the Asiatic mainland and lay hands upon Smyrna, which is, next to Constantinople the great prize of the Near East. Nor does Italy find cause for satisfaction in the fact that, while her occupation of Rhodes is subjected to a plebiscite a few years hence and her surrender of the Dodecanese is demanded on behalf of Greece by her recent partners, France is solidly established at Beirut and Damascus and Aleppo have received French garrisons; while Britain holds Mesopotamia and Palestine.

For Italy the dream of resuming the pathway of Venice, of regaining the old bases of Genoese prosperity in the Near East has been cherished with increasing intensity for many years. At the outset of Italian entrance into the present war, her prospective

LEAVE TO FEED RUSSIANS



COL. WILLIAM HASKELL, chief of the American Relief Administration's mission to Russia, sailed recently from New York with his wife and little daughter to take charge of starvation relief measures.

affects Constantinople and the Straits is not, of itself difficult. Leaving out the question of conflicting aspirations of great powers and strategic considerations of importance to sea powers, there seems no logical or reasonable basis for longer opposing the return of Hellenic rule to the Golden Horn.

Eight years ago, at the close of the Second Balkan war Greece found herself suddenly increased from a state of 2,600,000 inhabitants with an area of 25,000 square miles, half as much as that of New York State, to a kingdom with 4,500,000, with an area of 42,000 square miles. Six years later the treaty of Sevres, still unratified, bestowed upon her the rest of the European estate of the Turk, right up to the Chatalja lines, where the Bulgarian armies came to their final stop in 1912, together with the Bulgarian frontage upon the Aegean.

Vast Grecian Expansion.

THUS Greece in Europe, with the Aegean Islands became a state of 52,000 square miles with a population of 5,500,000. In addition the treaty of Sevres placed Greece in occupation of Smyrna and a hinterland having an area of some 5,000 square miles and a population of more than 1,000,000.

The present war with the Angora government of Turkey has extended the Greek occupation in Asia Minor until it now passes the Bagdad Railway. North of the Meander River, which is the frontier between Greek and Italian spheres of interest, Greek troops today occupy all of the old Turkish provinces of Ismid, Bigha, Brusa and Aidin. In a word Greek occupation extends from the Black Sea to the Aegean and Constantinople is wholly surrounded by territory Greek by conceded right or by virtue of military occupation.

Moreover, Constantinople itself is not only the home of a very large Greek population, which has become the most important alien element, but it is in tradition and history a Greek city. When the

Constantinople, not in Athens, the tradition of Greek greatness and Greek subjects of the Osmanli became powerful in the Mohammedan state.

Today the Turk is defeated and his European estate is gone, save only as he clings to a shadowy title to Constantinople, where the Sultan sits in his palace, protected by allied bayonets. Actually the power has passed from Constantinople to Angora and from the Sultan to Kemal Pasha. The Sultan is no more than a prisoner of the great powers, as such, without power or influence even among his own people.

Powerless as he was, the Sultan accepted the treaty of Sevres which gave Greece Thrace, with Adrianople, and a frontage on the Aegean on the Asiatic shore, with Smyrna. But Kemal Pasha, asserting that the Sultan was a prisoner and forced to accept this treaty under duress, rejected it and led the Turkish troops, raised in Asia Minor, to battle against the Greeks. The real as contrasted with the theoretical capital became Angora. But victorious at first, Kemal seems now to have been decisively defeated. His army has long been in retreat since it was heavily beaten at Kutaia and on the Bagdad Railway.

MEANTIME Europe has watched the spectacle of this new war, powerless to intervene because, while the British desired to see Greece victorious, the French and Italians were equally anxious to see Greek armies expelled not alone from Smyrna but also from Adrianople. Thus Greece now the possessor of most of the Turk's old lands in Europe and beginning to take foot on the Asiatic shore, finds herself the heir of Turkey, not only in the matter of real estate, but also in the case of all the old rivalries and jealousies which have divided Europe for a century.

Yet it is clear that the present situation cannot

CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE.